

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30/07/2012
Inspector	Tracy Murty
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides short-break care and accommodation for five young people. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **adequate**.

Young people make adequate progress during their stays at this home. A dedicated and committed staff team work hard to ensure that the holistic needs of young people are met. Clear communication between staff, parents and other agencies routinely takes place. Young people present as happy and relaxed at the home. Parents report satisfaction at the quality of care their children receive. Imaginative packages of care provide parents and carers with the support they need. Young people develop skills and confidence during the time spent at the home. Young people feel safe and are kept safe from actual or potential harm. This is a particular strength of this home.

There are some shortfalls. The wishes, views and feelings of young people do not receive detailed or regular consideration by the Registered Manager. Some areas of the home present as institutionalised, and the Statement of Purpose is in need of updating. Some aspects of the recruitment procedures for staff have not been fully completed, and details of the complaints procedure have not been provided to parents and carers. Special dietary needs of some young people are not currently being met. The home is required to maintain a register of all young people accommodated there, which is not currently in place. The records of staff supervision sessions do not include details of the duration.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
29 (2001)	ensure that a record in the form of a register shows in respect of each child accommodated in a children's home; the date of his admission, the date on which he ceased to be accommodated there, his address prior to being accommodated there, his address on leaving the home, his placing authority, the statutory provision under which he is accommodated (Regulation 29(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))	01/09/2012
5 (2001)	ensure that the statement of purpose is kept under review and where appropriate, revise it and notify the HMCI of any such revision within 28 days (Regulation 5(a)(b))	01/09/2012
13 (2001)	ensure that any special dietary needs of a child accommodated in the home, which is due to his health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background, is met (Regulation 13(2))	01/09/2012
24 (2001)	ensure that the complaints procedure and the arrangements for the procedure are made known to parents (Regulation 24(2)(e)(ii))	01/09/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to staff in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 26(3)(d))	01/09/2012

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children understand how their views have been taken into account, and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why. This is with particular reference to views raised in young people's meetings and consultation processes (NMS 1.2)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable environment and is well maintained and decorated, whilst not leading to an institutional feel. This is with particular reference to the bathroom and shower room (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references for all people working in or for the children's home (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the length of each supervision held for each member of staff. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **adequate**.

Young people have made real progress in relation to their confidence and social skills. They present as happy and relaxed when staying at this home for short break stays. Parents report confidence in how their children present, both before and after their stays.

As this is a short break service, young people continue to have their health care needs mostly met outside of the service. Staff ensure that full details of young people's health care needs are recorded and responded to accordingly, during their stays. Staff promote a range of healthy activities for young people to engage in, including walks in the park and trips out.

Parents report that their children present as confident and secure during their short break stays. One parent stated that their child 'always smiles when they are going there and on returning home. They always seem relaxed with the staff'. Parents and social workers report confidence in the staff keeping young people safe during their visits to the home. The staff team ensure that parents and carers feel able to visit the home and call to discuss any issues. One parent stated that the staff always make them feel welcome and keep them informed of all relevant matters. A communication book system further ensures that parents are provided with key information about their child's stay and what they have been doing.

Young people continue to attend educational provisions whilst receiving short breaks, being transported to and from the home as necessary. The staff team work closely with educational providers as necessary to ensure appropriate information sharing takes place. The staff team also provides outreach services for families in the local area. They work closely with parents, young people and other professionals to ensure their holistic needs are met. One social worker reported that this enables consistent care for young people and support to parents on how to manage behaviours across a variety of settings.

Staff encourage young people to learn and develop new skills, dependent on their abilities and understanding. One parent reported that their child was much more confident and had developed social skills since coming to the home. One social worker reported noticeable and positive changes in the mood and behaviours of one young person, since receiving short breaks.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **adequate**.

Parents report satisfaction that their children enjoy positive and constructive relationships with the staff team. Young people look forward to coming to stay and present as happy and relaxed with staff and other young people. The home provides ample space for young people to enjoy both communal and more solitary

experiences. Staff present as having very detailed knowledge and understanding of each young person. They consider their individual needs and ensure that these are met in a safe and enjoyable way for each stay.

The staff team have a range of methods to communicate with young people, dependent on their individual needs. Young people take part in meetings and are assisted to complete a consultation document prior to review meetings. Information relating to complaints and advocacy services are prominently displayed in communal areas. Relevant information is also included in appropriate forms in the children's guide.

Young people take part in resident's meetings during their stays to share their wishes, feelings and views. Staff use a variety of communication tools to ensure that young people can express themselves and contribute. The frequency of the meetings is not consistent and the recording of those meetings held does not reflect how young people's views have been taken into account. There is insufficient evidence of the Registered Manager formally responding to young people following those meetings.

While an independent person carries out monthly monitoring visits, they do not routinely communicate directly with young people to gain their views on the service they receive. Young people are supported to complete consultation forms prior to review meetings. There is insufficient evidence that the Registered Manager considers completed forms and takes any necessary action to comments made by young people. A requirement has been raised to address this shortfall.

Detailed short break care plans ensure that young people's individual needs are known and met. Close liaison and communication between the staff team and parents further ensure that young people feel safe and well cared for on each visit. One social worker praised the staff team for their commitment to supporting young people and their families. They reported that staff work very positively with parents to ensure that young people received continuity of care at all times.

Each young person has their own medication file. These have detailed information of current medications, as well as signed consents from parents for their administration. Medication is securely stored and administered by suitably trained staff. Whilst young people tend to access health services outside of the service, staff respond to any emergency needs promptly and in full consultation with parents.

Young people take part in a range of activities during their stay. Staff ensure that local resources are utilised, with parents stating how much their children enjoy spending time at the local parks and going out on trips with staff. The gardens surrounding the home have a wide range of specialist play equipment in place. Young people have access to a range of bicycles and a trampoline, as well as other outdoor equipment. Staff support young people to access a range of activities and events during their stay.

Staff demonstrate a detailed knowledge of young people's needs. This includes their cultural, religious and racial needs. Young people's needs are not always met in relation to certain areas. Dietary needs of some young people have not been robustly considered or met to date. Whilst the Registered Manager has identified this as an area of need, consultation with relevant parents and young people has not taken place. Some young people's needs are therefore not being met in relation to their dietary requirements. A requirement has been raised to address this shortfall.

The home is located in an urban area, with good access to a wide range of local resources. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The bathroom and shower room have a slightly bare and institutionalised feel to them. These rooms do not present as particularly welcoming or homely in their current state. A recommendation has been made to address this shortfall.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people present as happy and relaxed when staying at this home. Parents report total confidence in the staff team's ability to keep their children safe from actual or potential harm. The design and layout of the home further provides high levels of security for vulnerable young people. Staffing ratios ensure that young people receive good levels of supervision and support at all times of the day and night. One parent stated 'I have always felt that my child is safe, it is a home from home.'

Short break care plans and detailed risk assessments ensure that young people enjoy a positive and safe stay. Regular review meetings consider specific needs for each young people. Records of review meetings include clear recommendations and actions by involved professionals. Social workers report real confidence in the staff team's ability to keep young people safe from harm. Close partnership working and good communication with parents ensures young people feel safe and protected during their stays.

The selection and vetting of new staff is generally good. The Registered Manager has not consistently ensured that all relevant identification, qualification and employment history checks have been completed for all new staff. Whilst this has had minimal impact on young people or their safety, a recommendation has been made to address this shortfall.

There have been no reports of young people going missing from this home. The high staffing ratios and security within and outside of the property ensures their safety. Wake-in night staff ensure that young people remain safe and are monitored throughout the night. A robust protocol is in place in the event that any young person was to go missing. The Registered Manager demonstrates a good understanding of this and confidence in implementing it, should the need arise.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **adequate**.

The Registered Manager leads a committed and dedicated staff team. The home is adequately resourced; specialist items of furniture and equipment have recently been purchased for young people. Further works to extend the living accommodation of the home, are currently being undertaken. This will provide additional space and facilities for young people.

The home has a clear and detailed complaints policy and procedure in place. The Registered Manager considers all concerns or complaints and ensures their resolution in a timely manner. Parents and carers have not been provided with information relating to the complaints procedure in a language or form suitable to their needs. A requirement has been raised to address this shortfall.

One requirement was made as a result of the last inspection. This was in relation to ensuring that monthly quality assurance reports were supplied to Ofsted. This has now been completed satisfactorily and reports have been supplied every month. The provider meets the aims of objectives in their Statement of Purpose. The Registered Manager has not ensured that recent changes to staffing within the home have been included and a requirement has been raised to address this shortfall.

The Registered Manager regularly monitors the quality of care provided to young people and produces detailed monthly reports. The home has implemented a development plan to consider and address relevant issues and areas of need. The plan is very detailed and covers a wide range of areas, with target dates set for completion.

Staff receive regular and relevant training to assist them in their roles. The staff team demonstrate a detailed understanding of the needs of young people and have skills and knowledge relevant to their positions. Staff receive regular supervision, which is recorded in an appropriate form. The duration of each supervision has not been recorded however, and a recommendation has been made to address this shortfall. This omission does not have a detrimental impact on young people accessing the service.

The staff team works closely and positively with other agencies and professionals, to ensure the holistic needs of young people are met. Social workers and parents state their satisfaction at the level and quality of information sharing and consultation by the staff team. The Registered Manager demonstrates an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has begun to implement a number of strategies to address these. Such strategies include considering the implementation of an intimate care policy.

The Registered Manager has not kept up to date a register of those young people accessing the service. A requirement has been raised to address this shortfall. Records relating to young people are stored securely and contribute to an

understanding of the young people's lives. The Registered Manager ensures that all relevant health and safety checks take place within required timescales.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.